

Test and Trace services continue over the festive period

All test sites will remain open, with booking slots available on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day. Test site operating hours may be extended if there is increased demand for PCR testing.

Please book a PCR test if you have COVID-19 symptoms or if you have tested positive following an LFD test. You can [book a test online](#) or by calling 119.

People will be able to order LFD and PCR tests every day over the festive period. The 119 service will continue to operate on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve from 7am to 6pm, and Christmas Day and New Year's Day from 7am to 5pm. On other days, the service will operate from 7am to 11pm.

In some cases, tests may take slightly longer than usual to arrive due to Royal Mail's collection and delivery times over the festive period.

The public can continue to order a test via [GOV.UK](#).

NHS Test and Trace contact tracers will also continue to work throughout the festive period, with services provided online through the self-service process on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

The vital work of NHS Test and Trace will not stop for Christmas. I am very grateful to every single member of our staff who, right through the pandemic, have been part of our front line services against the pandemic. They will be sacrificing time with their loved ones to make sure testing and tracing continues, with minimal disruption to our services during the festive season.

With COVID-19 cases currently at record levels, we must continue with precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of the virus.

If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, you must self-isolate and take a PCR test as soon as possible. If you do not have symptoms, please take an LFD test before visiting vulnerable friends and family, and before situations where there is a higher risk of catching or passing on the virus. Continue to keep practising hands, face, space and increase ventilation when you are meeting indoors.

It remains vital to follow the guidance and make sure to take up the offer of a vaccine.

Due to Royal Mail collection times, people using home test kits will be given

advice about how to return their kits during the festive period as some tests will need to be posted by midday on Christmas Eve and 31 December. There will be no collections on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

There will be a weekend collection service on 26 December, 27 December, 28 December, 2 January, and 3 January. In Scotland, a weekend collection service will also apply on 4 January.

Opening hours for testing sites (including local and drive through testing sites)

Date	Opening hours
24 December (Christmas Eve)	8am to 6pm
25 December (Christmas Day)	10am to 2pm
26 December (Boxing Day)	10am to 2pm
27 December	8am to 6pm
28 December	8am to 6pm
29 December	8am to 6pm
30 December	8am to 6pm
31 December (New Year's Eve)	8am to 6pm
1 January (New Year's Day)	10am to 2pm (Northern Ireland 10am to 3pm)

Opening hours for 119

Date	Opening hours
24 December (Christmas Eve)	7am to 6pm
25 December (Christmas Day)	7am to 5pm
26 December (Boxing Day)	7am to 11pm
27 December	7am to 11pm
28 December	7am to 11pm
29 December	7am to 11pm
30 December	7am to 11pm
31 December (New Year's Eve)	7am to 6pm
1 January (New Year's Day)	7am to 5pm

Fishing without a licence costs two Staffordshire men over £1,200

- The pair were fishing without a licence
- Annual fishing licence would have cost just £30 each

A fishing day trip to Carney Pools in Bishton, Stafford on 9 May this year for 2 men from Staffordshire has resulted in them each receiving a penalty of

£619 for fishing without a licence.

Their cases were brought to Cannock Magistrates Court by the Environment Agency on Tuesday 7 December where 27-year old Jon Hill of Dunbar Close, Stafford and 20-year old Sean Hill of East Holme, Hilderston, Stone were each ordered to pay a total penalty of £619. An annual fishing licence would have cost them just £30 each.

The penalties include a fine of £440 for fishing without a licence contrary to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975), costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £44.

Following the verdict, Nichola Tomlinson, Fisheries Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency, said:

This case shows how seriously the courts take these offences and we hope the high penalty will act as a deterrent to any angler who is thinking of fishing without a licence.

Fishing illegally can incur a fine of up to £2,500 and offenders can also have their fishing equipment seized. We inspect rod licences throughout the West Midlands and work 24/7, 7 days a week to check on cases of illegal fishing.

Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1-day licence costs from just £6 and an annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 – 16-year olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Recruitment Vacancy Administrative Officer: 1 Year fixed term appointment

News story

Details of a vacancy for an Administrative Officer in the International Office based in Addlestone, Surrey.



This exciting and interesting role is part of the Development and Training Team of the International Office, which is responsible for leading the strategic vision for VMD international activity.

We coordinate the input of technical experts from across the VMD into international collaborations and projects, from the development of new regulatory pathways and approaches to providing capacity building support to other veterinary medicines regulators

Job Title

Administrative Officer – International Office

Grade

Administrative Officer

Salary & Pension

£24,369 London per annum with Pension Scheme

Annual Leave entitlement

Commencing at 25 days

Role

The job holder is responsible for carrying out the administrative duties of the International Office while supporting colleagues with the delivery of international and national capacity building training activities.

The International Office is an ever-changing environment, and the job holder will have the opportunity to contribute to multiple new and interesting projects.

How to apply

You must make your application via [Civil Service Jobs – GOV.UK](#) where you will find a full job description including salary details.

Closing Date

10 January 2022

Published 21 December 2021

[John Edwards is confirmed as the new Information Commissioner](#)

News story

John Edwards has been appointed Information Commissioner from 3 January 2022 by Letters Patent.



On 17 December 2021 Her Majesty by Letters Patent appointed John Edwards as Information Commissioner with his five year term beginning on 3 January 2022.

John Edwards was previously New Zealand's Privacy Commissioner and will bring with him a wealth of data regulatory experience, as Privacy Commissioner but also from 20 years of practicing law and specialising in information law.

Under the Data Protection Act, the Information Commissioner is appointed by Her Majesty by Letters Patent on the basis of fair and open competition and on the recommendation from ministers (the Secretary of State for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, through the Prime Minister). John Edwards' appointment as Information Commissioner was approved by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee after a pre-appointment hearing on 9 September 2021.

Ministers were assisted in their decision-making by an Advisory Assessment Panel which included a departmental official and a senior independent panel member approved by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

ENDS

- This appointment process was run in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.
- Remuneration for the new Information Commissioner will be £200,000.
- The ICO is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights. The Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport is the ICO's sponsoring department within Government. [Further information about the ICO](#)
- The previous Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, finished her term on 30 November. Paul Arnold, the ICO's Deputy Chief Executive, was designated as the ICO's Accounting Officer from 1 December 2021 until 2 January 2022. The regulatory responsibilities of the Commissioner are delegated to Deputy Commissioners through the ICO's Scheme of Delegation. This ensures continuity of regulatory decision making during this period.

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[Budding scientists predict the future for UK defence and security](#)

Cyber vulnerabilities, campaigns of disinformation and even use of remote areas of the Arctic.

These form part of the [futures imagined by university students](#) as part of Dstl's competition to encourage greater diversity of thought.

The winner of a £250 cash prize was Thomas Bradbury, of University of Exeter,

who will also receive a commemorative coin for his essay Future of the Arctic.

Joint runners-up were Richard Brown, from Northumbria University, who submitted 'Wearable, implantable, medical devices (WIMDs) of Change', and Kirsty Goodman, from University College London, who wrote about Blockchain-Enabled Self-Sovereign Identity.

This was followed by 'A Pandemic Enabled by Technological Advance' by Laurence Legon from University of Warwick. These entries also got Dstl coins.

The top 10 will have their essays immortalised by publication in a prestigious Dstl journal.

These also include Valerie Buckland, from Lancaster University, Neil Ashdown, from Royal Holloway University, Edward Holland, from University of Exeter, Fearghal Hughes, from University of Liverpool, Jack Suitor, from Wallace Lab, and Nick Johnson, from Edinburgh University.

Programme Adviser and competition organiser Cayleigh Galloway said:

We are delighted at the quality and novel ideas that came across in the essays.

I would like to congratulate all those who submitted their work giving us their visions of future threats and opportunities. These entries showed a huge amount of interest and enthusiasm about science and technology in the next generation of innovators.

There were 54 entries plus 2 that were not eligible. Applications came from 40 universities.

One entry was discounted because it was found to have been written by a robot. Another came from a 15-year-old school pupil, Khadijah Akuji from Thornhill Community Academy. However, judges were so impressed with the latter entry, entitled Societal Reactions of Emerging Technology, that the author was awarded a coin and their work will be included in the final journal.

Dstl has also offered to deliver a science lesson to the school.

Head of Exploration Division and member of the judging panel Linda Knutsen said:

The high calibre of these thought-provoking entries gave us new perspectives and a unique insight into what may be important to the next generation of budding scientists.

The ability to prepare for a variety of alternate futures is at the heart of everything we do and is vital in keeping our armed forces,

and the public, safe.

It is heartening to imagine some of these young writers may one day be working alongside our world-class people creating the innovations of tomorrow.

[Read the top 10 winning futures essays.](#)